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COMPREHENSIVE TEST-BAN TREATY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Letter dated 16 August 1995 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of a statement by the President of the United States concerning a comprehensive test-ban treaty (see annex).

May I ask for your kind assistance in circulating the present letter and attached statement as a document of the General Assembly, under item 65 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Madeleine K. ALBRIGHT

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ANNEX

Statement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty by the President of the United States of America made on 11 August 1995

Today I am announcing my decision to negotiate a true zero-yield comprehensive test ban. This is a historic milestone in our efforts to reduce the nuclear threat and to build a safer world. The United States will now insist on a test ban that prohibits any nuclear-weapon-test explosion. I am convinced this decision will speed the comprehensive test ban next year.

As a central part of this decision, I am establishing concrete, specific safeguards that define the conditions under which the United States will enter into a comprehensive test ban. These safeguards will strengthen our commitments in the areas of intelligence, monitoring and verification, stockpile stewardship, maintenance of our nuclear laboratories and test readiness. They also specify the circumstances under which I would be prepared, in consultation with Congress, to exercise our supreme national interest rights under a comprehensive test ban to conduct necessary testing if the safety or reliability of our nuclear deterrent could no longer be certified.

As a part of this arrangement I am today directing the establishment of a new annual reporting and certification requirement that will ensure that our nuclear weapons remain safe and reliable under a comprehensive test ban.

I appreciate the time, the energy and the wisdom that the Secretaries of State, Defense and Energy, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Directors of Central Intelligence and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency have all devoted to the review of this crucial national security issue over the last several months.

American leaders since Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy have believed a comprehensive test ban would be a major stride towards stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Now, as then, such a treaty would greatly strengthen the security of the United States and nations throughout the world. But now, unlike then, such a treaty is within our reach.

It would build upon the successes we have achieved so far: securing a permanent extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty; freezing North Korea's nuclear programme; cutting existing nuclear arsenals by putting the START I treaty into force; persuading Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakstan to give up their nuclear weapons and to reach agreements with the Russian Federation that now mean that both our nations no longer target our missiles at each other.

A comprehensive test ban is the right step as we continue pulling back from the nuclear precipice, a precipice we began to live with 50 years ago this week. It moves us one step closer to the day when no nuclear weapons are detonated anywhere on the face of the Earth.